



MAFMC
Forage Panel Discussion
April 11, 2013

Trigger Questions



Forage Panel Trigger Question Set 1

1. Is a generic definition of forage possible?
2. What are the key considerations when determining appropriate buffers to manage forage species to achieve ecosystem level objectives (i.e., to enhance and protect the marine ecosystem)?
3. What is the range of exploitation rates the Council should consider for forage species?
4. What trade-offs (biological, economic, etc.) would the Council face if it adopts exploitation policies or control rules for forage species to preserve or enhance ecosystem structure and function?
5. How have the benefits of ecological sustainability been valued and assessed in other examples?



Forage Panel Trigger Question Set 2

1. Why is the assumption of constant natural mortality not sufficient to allow forage stocks to fulfill their role(s) within ecosystems?
2. To address special management of forage species, should the Council increase B_{target} or maintain current MSY based BRPs and add buffers?
3. At what level in the OFL-ABC-OY continuum is special management consideration for forage species best handled - at the stock assessment level or as an OY consideration? Both?



Forage Panel Trigger Question Set 2

4. If predation mortality (M_2) is modeled explicitly in a stock assessment for a forage species, is that sufficient to maintain or enhance ecosystem structure and function? Would changes to BRPs still be necessary? Would incorporation of M_2 directly in the assessment automatically readjust BRPs?
5. How could system level or trophic level OY caps contribute to the management of species interactions within MA fisheries and the Council's ecosystem objectives?



Forage Panel/Council – TQ Set 1

1. How should the Council approach addressing the issue of special management of forage species (i.e., should the Council consider revising BRPs or maintain current BRPs and consider additional buffers?)
2. Where and when in the process is this issue most effectively addressed? At the stock assessment (M2), OFL, ABC, OY levels? All of the above?



Panel/Council TQ Set 2

1. Is the current state of knowledge sufficient to provide tactical advice to the Council relative to special management of forage species?
2. What other information/analyses are necessary to provide tactical advice to the Council on forage fish management?

Panel/Council TQ 3

1. Given the current state of the science related to this issue, what steps can the Council take in the near term to develop an exploitation policy for forage stocks to insure that their role in maintaining or enhancing ecosystem structure and function is preserved?